

The What If Tales: New Years

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Summary: A short story set in the alternate universe to the Halo
Storyline... It may have that Old Familiar Feeling. Enjoy.

The What If Tales: New Years

****What If Tales: Happy New Years****

It was coldâ€¦ But what the hell, it should beâ€¦ from the blood that drained away from Corporal Hall's face, his back was pressed against the stone wall, salty beads of water poured down his forehead. He inhaled sharply, again and looked over the white dry stone, and he saw them. Hundreds of those creatures coming at him, at his squad. This was Franceâ€¦ they weren't suppose to be here whatever they were. They weren't supposed to exist; they were likeâ€¦ demons out of his worst nightmares.

He ignored the thoughts, he pushed them to the deepest recesses of his mind and loaded a clip into his rifle, and he heard his lieutenant begin to speak. "Okay gentlemen, we weren't preparing for thisâ€¦ But we prepared for those kraut bastards and these guys look a bit like them."

Scattered laughs, but not enough to take Hall's mind off the situation.

He glanced down at his watch; it was almost midnight, yesâ€¦ Almost new years. His tour was supposed to be up a month ago, in November. "Okay boys, we're doin' it like the good ol' days. To your feet!"

Of course he didn't want to, but his squad, his fellow army men were depending on him to get this job done right and not to get anyone killed. Something which so far he was good at.

The Corporal brought the primarily wooden rifle to his shoulder, and turned to look at the enemy, seeing the horrors again for the umpteenth time. They came in many shapes, the first ranks were mainly

shielded, golden and blue lights shimmered in the dark, behind them were hundreds. Thousands of the tanked fellows, whose barks echoes through the night. Last of the horrors, of the creatures were the tall ones, powerful, muscles of pure steel and four jaws that snapped angrily in their direction.

They were truly elite of their kind And that's what the soldiers called them: Elites.

Behind them was Paris, the most beautiful city in the world, the Eiffel Tower and all around it was in flames, flames licked the night sky and gunfire was rampant throughout the countryside, and this attack was just another of many assaults to try and break the United States Army infantry men's hold, who had quarantined the city and evacuated the civilians.

"Okay gents, I don't want anything getting through!" The Lieutenant yelled, "Fire at will!"

Hall looked down the barrel, took his sight on the small gaps in the shielded alien's formation. His eyes narrowed, he held his breath, took aim. Then fired.

Lieutenant Thomas Quinn frowned, and looked down at his SCR-300 Operator and shouted. "Where the hell are those tanks?"

"Don't know sir We've been getting static for the past hour; maybe they've been jamming us!" The radio operator replied.

The Lieutenant frowned, "Try again, we need those tanks."

"Yes, sir." The operator looked reached onto his back and grabbed the handset and yelled into it. "This is Task Force Baker, I repeat Task Force Baker we need tank support, over."

A continuing hissing was his reply.

"I can't raise them, Lieutenant, I can't raise them."

The Captain set down his binoculars, and moved from the low stone wall, into the sandbag bunker and snatched the handset out of the radio operator's hand. "This is Lieutenant Quinn of the United States Army Task Force Baker, we need tank support Hell we need anything you can send. I repeat this is Quinn of Task Force Baker, we need reinforcements over."

He glanced over his shoulder, back up the small dip towards the wall. They were outnumbered, outgunned and out smarted by a superior race of beings not of this world. For the first time since they came into contact with the beings, Quinn thought that they were going to die.

Hall heard the slight ping of the rifle out of ammo, and reached down to his pouch and brought up the eight round clip. Shoved it to the receiver and resumed his fire. He looked straight ahead, and took sight, where the shielded aliens were, he saw a gap showing a smaller tank alien. There were firing small diminutive looking weapons which resembled pistols, green spheres soared towards his squad but either they went too high or hit the stone wall.

Luckily for them, the small bastards weren't the best shots in the world. Neither were their shielded friends, but the elite onesâ€¦ They weren't to be trifled with.

He steadied his shot, aimed and then pulled the trigger slowly. The first of eight rounds tore through the small alien's armor; it stumbled but ignored the pain and kept going. The Corporal took sight at the five foot tall creatures head and fired, three shot sizzled by its head, and kept going moving forward but the fifth shot was right on the money.

The round tore through the center of the creature's forehead and outside the other end, and maybe even took another one with it. It fell without even a further twitch.

One down, a couple thousand to go.

Quinn for the past ten minutes continued to shout into the radio with no avail, but maybeâ€¦ He was hoping that maybe that they were just being jammed for signals coming in, and not signals going out. That gave him a bit of hope, but that hope could his life and the lives of his men in danger. Something he didn't want but he didn't want to jeopardize the holding line either. If he fell back to regroup he didn't know if the allied line could hold with a platoon sized gap, it could be exploited and from what he and his men had faced, the elite ones were pretty good when it came to strategy.

Noâ€¦ He would stay until he was _ordered _to fall back and not a second earlier.

The lieutenant looked at his radio operator, ordered him to keep trying while he checked the line and make sure that his boys were holding up well. Or well enough, six days of none stop fighting would take its toll sooner or later.

Later rather than sooner.

His submachine gun in his hand he moved toward his right, heading down the line, blue and green blobs flew over the wall, he saw no casualties yet but the creatures were still two hundred yards out so their would most likely vastly improve when they got within a hundred yards.

Hall fired, like a robot, when the eight rounds were up, he reloaded, and continued. Not wanting to let them get a chance to have a chance to fill in the large unshielded gap in their lines. He reached down to his belt, reached into the cloth pouch to receive the rifle clipâ€¦ It was thereâ€¦

Out of ammo.

"I need more ammo!" He reached down his hip to grab his pistol, but knew it wasn't there. The assault on the beach had robbed him of most of his gear, and when these new combatants showed up he didn't have a real chance to rearm or re-supply other than rob from his dead squad mates. "I need ammo!"

He looked down up and down the line; no one replied to him, no one even glanced his way.

This situation couldn't get any worseâ€¦

That was when he was wrong the sky behind the assaulting army lit up in a bluish light and a dozens of blue-white blobs went up, they seemed to hang into the for what seemed forever. And then they came down, Hall's eyes followed them, and they were coming downâ€¦ Fastâ€¦

He didn't shout it, but sure as hell was thinking it. "Incoming!" He didn't think twice about abandoning the wall, and diving down hill, nor did his fellow soldiers. He would survive, but the men who didn't notice the blobsâ€¦ They weren't going to be so lucky.

Quinn felt himself being picked up, heat pin pricking his back the force tossing him like a rag dog thirty feet upward, _into _the field, into the incoming wave of enemy troops.

Air exploded from his lungs, bells rang inside his head. His body felt heavy, tons, he could barely move, he didn't even feel his legs, but he felt the boots, and knew that his feet were still there. He then wiggled his fingers, all seemed to be there.

Thomas rolled onto his side, blue eyes gazing the incoming storm, he could feel the vibrations on the ground, thousands. He coughed, felt a liquid sputter outside of his mouth, he slowly brought his trembling hand to his chapped lips, and brought it into his sights.

Dark red, internal bleedingâ€¦ Damnâ€¦

I needâ€¦ Quinn inhaled.

Medicâ€¦ Quinn exhaled.

Needâ€¦Helpâ€¦ Exhale.

Medicâ€¦ Inhale.

Everythingâ€¦ fadingâ€¦darkâ€¦ He rolled himself to look at where the wall had been, nothing but a large gaping gap, smoking with charred bodies around it. He saw nothing else except smoke which lingering on that area.

He saw something burst through the haze, moving fast, toward him, quick, but then again it was just a shadow to him. It stopped in front of him.

"Lieutenantâ€¦" He looked up; saw a shadow contrasting against the light. "-getting you out of here."

The voice was recognizable, but he couldn't trace who it was. Coldness surrounded him, darkness clouded his vision and everything just faded to black.

Hall looked down at his commanding officer, the man was knocked out and he didn't see any visible woundsâ€¦ So that was a good sign. He glanced back at what use to be the stone wall and then forced his eyes to peer at the incoming enemy military. There was smoke so he was hoping that they wouldn't be seen, but if the situation continued, it wouldn't really matter.

The Corporal reached down and grabbed the Lieutenant's submachine gun, checked the magazine, it was still full and slung it over his shoulder. His commander wouldn't need it. "C'mon, sir, I'm going to get you out of here."

He reached down, grabbed the man's collar hoisting him to his feet with a; "Oi," It was funny, he had never used the term, heard it from another fighter during a similar situation. "Sir, you really need to cut down on your ration intake."

Hall hefted this man over his shoulders and started a quick pace toward back toward their line.

He felt it, brush past his left leg, the cloth heated and burned away leaving his skin a bright red. A burn. His knee buckled for a second, but he kept going.

Every second felt like an hour, and each step he took seemed as if he was moving with a snail's pace. Green and blue blobs sailed over him, impacted in front of him and almost touched the heels of his boots.

Ten feet remained, he heard the creatures behind him no, their barks and cries above the din. The sounds echoing throughout his skull.

His feet reached the remains of the wall which slowed his pace down but kept going.

Moved through the rubble and down the hill, Hall was what he thought that he would be safe now but the word safe was something that could not be trusted, not anymore. Since New York and Washington DC were hit, the word had lost all meaning when they attacked.

He continued to go down the small hill, the grass wet beneath his feet, and he stopped. For the first time he turned around and saw his progress. He was one foot away from the wall and he saw a silhouette above, and it wasn't human, it jumped a few inches into the air as if surprised and gave a loud bark sound pointing at him.

The foe didn't see Hall's fellow soldiers to his left and to his right of the gap, target him and mow him down in a hail lead. Hall must've been the last thing the creature saw.

Hall placed the CO on the ground, setting him down gently, he still wasn't moving but at least he was still breathing and he hadn't taken a shot to the back or anything like that. Great. "Medic! I need a medic!"

He looked around, he placed two fingers on the Lieutenant's right wrist, the pulse was strong, and Quinn was still hanging in there.

"Medic, god-damn it! Medic!"

There was a shadow, hell in the night there was always a shadow, but this one came in a pair who moved fast, stopped next to Hall and his wounded soldier. One was a Corporal, same rank while the other was a Major who himself had a patch over his right eye, on his helmet was a

large crimson cross. Red splotches splattered all over their uniform, and dirt blotted their faces.

"My prayers have been answered!" He thought.

"What the hell happened to him?" The Major yelled, he didn't know why, a grenade going off a bit too close to the head maybe? It didn't matter.

"He was hit by some artillery!" Replied Hall, his eyes darted as if crazed, but the two men didn't seem to notice.

"Any flesh wounds?"

"Don't think so!" I think he was just knocked unconscious."

The Major continued to speak while the Corporal checked the Lieutenant's breathing, and scanned the body over for any hits, he saw none though and slung of his pack. Hall was staring at the man but the Major turned to him and snapped his fingers. "Pay attention, Corporal."

"Sorry sir."

"Look, we're getting him out of here."

"Fine by me sir!" Just get him out of here." Hall looked at the Lieutenant one last time and moved back up the hill, when he turned to give a last glance at the Medics, he saw the Corporal pulling out a stretch in two pieces and assembling it.

He had to get back to the platoon sergeant's position and tell him what happened, and maybe find out what the hell is going on.

The SC-300 Operator frowned, the Lieutenant was gone and he hadn't seen the platoon for an hour, the bullshit that was going on was getting worse. And the situation was getting to the state of FUBAR. No, it past that stage half a year ago.

He checked the radio, and repeated broadcasting like he was ordered to. "This is Task Force Baker; we need immediate reinforcements over!" He checked his watch. It was eleven forty-five, the fight had been going on for only fifteen minutes and they were already knee deep in trouble. "This is Task Force Baker!" We need reinforcements now, over."

He muttered a curse and then heard something much unexpected!" A reply. "This is-"Static "-we're on the way!" I repeat this-"More damn static. "We're on the way, ETA five minutes I repeat!" Five minutes."

The whole radio went into static and nothing else. He prayed it some serious backup but anyone with a rifle and a few clips of ammo would do.

The Operator heard the sounds of battle get closer and closer and he heard something he didn't want hear.

"Anyone with a weapon, to the wall!"

Hall was making his way down the line, the whole right side of his head was beginning to hear only hollowed out sounds. He expected that the attack was repulsed, since the enemy hadn't over run them yet but something didn't feel right, something was wrongâ€¦

"What the fuck are they doing?" It was a voice of another soldier, it was perplexed and that caused the men around him to stop firing.

Hall didn't need to be told twice, he canceled his little mission to stand straight up from his crouching position and looked over the wall, they were still there, of course they were but they had stopped, and there seemed to be ten hard gaps in their columns of troops that extended all the way to the rear. Hall spoke what everyone was thinking. "I have a bad feeling about this."

They didn't see the first of two dozen rapid attack vehicles coming at them at first, they were moving too fast but the ghostly howl in the night caused the whole line to stop firing and look ahead. They had no wheels; their purple armor glinted in the light of the fires and off the shimmering shields of the bird like creatures.

Considering the fact that Hall had never seen the creatures deploy these things on the battlefield, he didn't know what to expect. But he did know that these aliens were full of surprises and this was one of them. The columns of rapid attack craft came straight at them, and from the little stubby wings more of the energy like weaponry exploded outward.

Everything the enemy had was built to killâ€¦ But then againâ€¦ It was a war. But as far as Hall could tell there were no medics, no radio crews, nothingâ€¦ They fought and died knowing their purpose. The soldier just didn't know how that was possible.

They were more dedicated than the krauts, and he was talking about before the beach landings.

The bluish blobs streaked at the line, and they weren't expecting it, to Hall's right he saw a man take a bolt to the face, he didn't scream, he wasn't able to since the bolt hit his mouth and instead clutched what used to be the bottom half of his jaw and withered in pain. Blood trickled out of his grime stained fingers.

To his left, another man. More like a boy, took a round to the chest, let out a ear shattering scream of pain, dropped his rifle which discharged and caught another soldier in the hip taking them both down. The boy continued to scream, just that loud ear piercing scream while the veteran that took the round, struggled to his feet and began to fire once again. Blood continued to stream but he didn't notice the battle was more important.

Hall distracted by the situation turned just in time, to see the massive claw of a covenant creature launch at him and caused him to jump out of his shoes and socks.

Reflex, he brought the weapon up to bear and fired, the weapon hit its target, the small creature yelped as the first rounds entered its arm. Blue fluorescent blood splattered on the stone and the rounds after hit the tank.

Boom.

Hall felt something warm splatter on his chest, and on his face, his eyes were squeezed shut but when he opened them the creature was gone. When he finally looked down he saw that there was blue gore spread all over his skin and clothes.

A short lived victory, for behind him was the already charging mass of alien units that began swarming over the wall and initiating hand to hand combat with the human forces.

Hall saw a infantryman run in front of him, a knife in his grasp and jump onto one of those runts oversized tank, the five foot tall creature ran in loops, squealing loudly before the soldier embedded the six inch blade into the creatures skull which caused it to fall forward and spill the man -who was around the same height to the ground.

And the man found himself looking up to see an enemy pistol aimed at his face, Hall fired a burst at the alien which took off its head and it fell to the ground.

The man smiled, "I owe you one." But his eyes widened when he saw Hall aiming at his head, "What the hell are you doing?!" He raised his hands to shield his face, ready to feel the boiling hot

Hall pulled the trigger the man ducked, hearing the shriek of something behind him.

The Corporal nodded.

"You owe me twice, buddy."

Hall had gunned down the second minuscule alien, and turned to gun down another but was unexpected by seeing something bigger, a hell of a lot bigger. Not one of those shielded birds, but something at least eight feet tall, its jaw split into four separate pieces, its body rippling of purple muscle. And it looked angry.

It took one step over the wall.

A growl escaped its lips with words escaping its fanged laced mouth.
"Wort, wort, wort."

The man Hall saved looked up and got up to run, but this creature had a much stronger and rapid firing weapon than the other and gave the soldier two shots to the man's back, causing him to yell before toppling to the ground, head over heels before settling at Hall's feet.

"Oh damnâ€¦!"

The creature snarled, and Hall raised his submachine gun, the burst of ammo escaped the muzzle. The .45 ACP rounds bounced off a reflective surface that covered the creature's body.

He reached down to switch, but instead brought the much smaller clip from his rifle. Out of ammo and nothing to spare.

"_Oh damn."_

The creature raised its weapon but then gave an amused grunt and dropped the bluish weapon to the ground. Its mandibles spread wide; Hall swore he saw a large smile on the monster's face.

This is bad. That thought repeated itself a dozen times in a millisecond.

The elite moved forward in quick strides towards Hall, its mandibles opening and closing as it went. Hall eyes searched for a weapon, anything, and he doubted the rocks on the ground would do him any good. But hell it was worth a shot.

He threw the submachine gun to the ground, reached down and grabbed a heft piece of rubble from on the ground. He did a quick side arm, the rock flew those very few meters and hit.

The rock splintered, three sharp pieces flew every where.

The creature didn't even flinch.

The creature was only five feet away now; it loomed over him, almost seven feet tall and menacing. It looked down at the human and snarled.

Fineâ€| Plan B. Hall felt his hand curl into a fist.

It loomed over him now, mere inches away.

It was the fastest he ever moved, his fist went upward, impacted the creature in its throat. The uppercut would've knocked a man out cold. Not this time. The creature didn't even flinch. "Wortâ€| Wortâ€|" It sounded like a bloody laugh and he knew it.

The elite raised a hand onto his chest and it barely used any strength before pushing him.

He went four feet back, his ass hit the ground. The elite didn't waste any time before giving a single step forward, the battle around them was unimportant now. Hall's survival was the only thing that came to his mind.

Corporal Frank Peterson Hall looked up, his hands against the cold grass, his eyes fixed upon the behemoth and rolled onto his hands and knees intent on crawling away, but when he managed to turn around he saw something he wished to god that it wasn't there.

_Another elite. _

He groaned, and was stopped, his escape blocked and his eyes faded with all hope, he looked down at the ground. He didn't expect to die like this, on his hands and knees like a weak fool. No tears came, no sobs just the awestruck appearance of a man who knew he was going to die.

_Hellâ€| You don't die like a weakling. Duty Firstâ€| You die like a fucking soldier. What if she was here to see this? _Hall nodded as his thoughts told him what to do. They gave him the strength. The adrenaline surged through him, his heart raced and the surge of

power.

He flew upward, a fist lancing as he came from his knees to his feet, intent on knocking this son of bitches block off.

The elite caught the blow, Hall's right hand settling in the elite's hand. It cocked its head to the side pleased at his little toy trying to become a hero.

Oh boyâ€| His arm was lifted into the air, and then he followed. A full foot of the ground and the elite was only holding him up with _one _arm. It then proceeded to toss him like a rag doll, into the air, Frank saw the ground become the sky and the sky become the ground. Then he saw the elite's leg curl.

Air from his lungs exploded outward, he wanted to scream but nothing came out. He sailed through the sky and felt himself impact something hard which felt like the ground and roll for five more yards and stopped at the base of a tree.

He coughed, touching his lips he saw the all too familiar red liquid pouring from his mouth. Everything felt heavy and he could barely breathe. But he stayed awake; he knew what happened if you fell asleep, if you grew too tired. He knew if he closed his eyes he wouldn't wake up again.

His eyes glazed over and he saw only the cold glare of two elites moving toward him, in their hunched back bodies blocking the light from the fires from Paris and the discharge of their weapons in the night.

This would be the last thing he would see before he died.

The radio operator ran, his feet pressing against the ground, pushing him to what he could see was flight. They were over run, his platoon and maybe his whole company was dead. And he was alone, the woods surrounding him, the burning city somewhere to his back. Voices on his radio but he paid them no mind.

He pushed the branches out of his face, and stumbled into a dirt road, in front was the forest continuing, to his right darkness but to his left, he saw themâ€| It must've been an armored unit â€"if the aliens had one and it was barreling down the road towards him. He wanted to run, but the bright white light that was shown off the lead vehicle left him like a deer in the middle of the road.

The radio operator gave a sob, as the vehicles came closer.

"I picked a hell of a day to quit smokin'."

They loomed over Hall, breathing, speaking in their alien tongue, taunting him. He held back the tears that wanted to form, he had given up, weakness shrouded him and everything now was to be taken away by the cold skeleton hands of the reaper.

The elite reached down at his side, and pulled one of the blue weapons from its place; it pointed it down at him and growled.

Hall remembered when he was first drafted by the Army. When he went to Africa and helped his division fight Rommel. When he was shipped

to England to assault Fortress Europe. And when he stormed the shores on June 6 on Omaha. They passed through his mind like lightning. Eyes closing, waiting for the end.

The end never came.

Both creatures were startled, the sound of rumbling, the loud sound of their gods betraying them. They saw the armored beasts burst through the tree line like demonic banshees bent on revenge. Their end had come.

The sound machine gun fire erupted around Hall, the pair of elites felt the bullets hit their shields. They quickly failed under the barrage of M2 Browning machinegun fire. They were quickly ripped to ribbons soon after. Their steaming bodies collapsed to the ground next Hall's immobile body.

Hall felt the tears finally slip, joy could've overcome him when he heard the rumbling pass him and common sound of a 75mm anti-tank rounds exploding at the enemy formations. The sound grew as more tanks joined the fray and infantry following right behind.

Boots came skidding to a halt in front of him.

"You're lucky as hell, soldier." The man voice flowed over him. "Medic! I need a medic over here! Stay with me buddy. You're lucky Patton brought us from England you know that? Medic!"

Hall knew this man was just trying to keep him awake, but motions would help, but all he saw was some kneeling feet.

More boots against the ground, human motions, chattering. And him being flipped from his side onto his back. He was lifted gently onto something that was not as comfortable as the grass but it wasn't meant to be.

He finally got to see the eyes of his savior. He was tall, ebony skin that stark contrast against his white teeth, when the man turned to walk next to the stretcher bearers he saw his rank was a Sergeant and he saw a patch he didn't recognize. It was some type large black cat eyes full of anger and teeth snared at him. Under the emblem was the numbers 761st.

Finally managing to speak, his mouth felt like it had been drinking pure sand, he murmured. "Who are you?"

"761st Tank Battalion, the Black Panthers." The man continued to walk and talk. "Seems like you boys had a hell of a night."

Hall nodded.

"Well, you don't need to worry now. Patton is pulling us out."

"What?"

"Didn't you know...?" But the man weighed his words; this unit was part of a brigade to hold off the alien forces and thus changed the way he spoke. "A gift from the General to you boys fighting hard over here, the boys upstairs decided that it was better to cut our losses

and retreat back to England. All of us."

"New Yearsâ€¦"

Hall felt the stretcher being hoisted into the rear of a vehicle and the black man followed inside. "Manâ€¦ You must've been fighting hard. When we get back to the medical tent, I'll give you an update on the situation but for now." The engine kicked up and they began to move, the engine told Hall they were in a half-track. "You should at least know it's January first 1945."

The man smiled, reassuringly.

"Happy New Years Corporal. Happy New Year."

End
file.